

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PM-05
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, US, UR, OTRA, CSCE
SUBJECT: SOVIETS TORPEDO AMBASSADOR'S BLACK SEA TRIP

SUMMARY: AT LAST MINUTE, MFA HAS DENIED REQUEST FOR
CLOSED AREA EXCEPTIONS FOR AMBASSADOR AND OFFICIAL
PARTY TRAVEL TO SEVASTOPOL AND BALAKLAVA ON APRIL
10. IN SO DOING, MFA HAS FORCED CANCELLATION OF
PLANNED AMBASSADORIAL TRIP TO ODESSA, YEVPATORIA,
SEVASTOPOL, YALTA, NOVOROSSISK, TUAPSE AND
SOCHI, WITH OFFICIAL CALLS IN ODESSA AND SEVASTOPOL.
EMBASSY RECOMMENDS APPROPRIATE WASHINGTON RETALIATION.
END SUMMARY.

1. ON MARCH 24, EMBASSY FILED TRAVEL NOTE WITH MFA
PROTOCOL REQUESTING CLOSED AREA EXCEPTIONS FOR
AMBASSADOR AND OFFICIAL PARTY TO TRAVEL TO SEVASTOPOL
AND BALAKLAVA ON APRIL 10. EXCEPTION REQUESTS WERE
FILED IN CONNECTON WITH PROPOSED AMBASSADORIAL TRIP
APRIL 7 - 16 TO BLACK SEA PORTS OF ODESSA,
YEVPATORIA, SEVASTOPOL, YALTA, NOVOROSSISK, TUAPSE
AND SOCHI ABORAD BLACK SEA STEAMER SS. UZBEKISTAN,
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WITH CALLS ON SOVIET OFFICIALS IN ODESSA AND
SEVASTOPOL. ON SAME DAY, EMBASSY NOTIFIED MFA PROTOCOL
AND USA DIVISION BY LETTER AND PHONE OF AMBASSADOR'S
INTENTION TO MAKE ROUND OF OFFICIAL CALLS WITH ABOVE
ITINERARY, AND REQUESTED MFA'S ASSISTANCE IN
PRODUCING SATISFACTORY SCHEDULE OF CALLS FOR AMBASSADOR.

2. OUR EXCEPTION REQUESTS WERE INITIALLY MET WITH SILENCE. REPEATED INQUIRIES ON WORKING LEVEL BETWEEN TRAVEL OFFICER AND VACHNADZE, AND BETWEEN POL COUNSELOR AND FEDOSEYEV YIELDED NOTHING. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, POL COUNSELOR NOTED THAT AMBASSADOR WOULD REACT VERY NEGATIVELY TO A TURNDOWN IN LIGHT OF ALL THE DEPARTMENT HAD DONE TO ACCOMMODATE DOBRYNIN'S REQUESTS OVER THE YEARS, AND BECAUSE OFFICIAL U.S. DELEGATIONS HAD BEEN ABLE TO VISIT SEVASTOPOL BEFORE. ONE WEEK BEFORE TRIP WAS DUE TO BEGIN, AMBASSADOR BROUGHT UP SUBJECT WITH KOMPLEKTOV, WHO RESPONDED IN HIS UNIQUE MANNER THAT "SPEAKING PERSONALLY," HE DOUBTED THAT PROSPECTS FOR GRANTING EXCEPTION REQUESTS WERE GOOD. REPEATING SAME LINE TO POL COUNSELOR APRIL 5 KOMPLEKTOV CIRCUITOUSLY IMPLIED THAT SOMETHING SPECIAL MIGHT BE GOING ON IN SEVASTOPOL AT THIS TIME.

3. FINALLY, ON AFTERNOON OF APRIL 6, DAY BEFORE TRIP WAS TO BEGIN, VACHNADZE CALLED TRAVEL OFFICER WITH "ORAL NOTE" WHICH HE READ OVER PHONE. GIST OF "NOTE" WAS THAT AMBASSADOR COULD NOT GO TO SEVASTOPOL ON DATE PLANNED (APRIL 10). HOWEVER, HE COULD GO ANYTIME BETWEEN APRIL 18 AND MAY 30, PROVIDED HE WAS ACCOMPANIED ONLY BY MRS. TOON. EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED. SEPARATE REQUEST FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXCEPTION TO VISIT BALAKLAVA WAS TURNED DOWN FLAT.

4. COMMENT: DUE TO SCHEDULING PROBLEMS, APRIL 18 - MAY 30 TIME FRAME VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR AMBASSADOR. SOVIETS ARE WELL AWARE THAT AMBASSADOR HAS FULL DOCKET OF ACTIVITIES DURING THIS PERIOD, AND ARE UNDOUBTEDLY BANKING ON HIS BEING UNABLE TO TRAVEL TO SEVASTOPOL DURING TIME OFFERED. IN ADDITION, THERE MAY BE MILITARY REASON FOR REFUSAL OF ORIGINAL VISIT DATE, AND WE ARE INVESTIGATING THIS ANGLE. IN ANY EVENT, SOVIETS HAVE SUCCEEDED IN REFUSING SEVASTOPOL WHILE KEEPING PRETENSE OF ALLOWING EXCEPTION. IN CASE OF BALAKLAVA, THEY HAVE BEEN FORCED TO ANSWER EXCEPTION REQUEST WITH CLEARCUT DENIAL.

5. EMBASSY NOTES THAT SOVIET UNDERHANDEDNESS OVER SEVASTOPOL IS TYPICAL OF WAY THEY IMPOSE DE FACTO TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON AMERICAN DIPLOMATS.

6. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS APPROPRIATE WASHINGTON RETALIATION. TOON

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 08 apr 1978
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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TAGS: PINT, OTRA, US, UR, CSCE, (TOON, MALCOLM)
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